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SUBJECT: REACHING OUT TO NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE'S MUSLIM
COMMUNITY

¶1. During a recent visit to Nampula, Mozambique's most populous province, the Charge hosted a meeting with eight Muslim leaders representing key Muslim groupings in the province: the Islamic Council of Mozambique, one of the most representative Muslim organizations in the country with more than three thousand affiliated mosques, 600 madrassas and three secondary schools in Nampula province alone; the Comunidade Muculmana, an influential Muslim grouping with the highest number of black Muslims; the Shia community, a smaller group but economically powerful; and the NGO AJIDE (Association of Islamic Youth), an organization that runs orphanages in some locations of Nampula province.

¶2. Participants echoed concerns raised by Muslim leadership in Maputo that they are discriminated against for government and donor funding and in media coverage, pointing to a recent initiative by Muslims in Nampula to donate blood to local hospitals that received almost no publicity, while a similar initiative by non-Muslims was widely publicized. Similarly, efforts to partner with the GRM's Cashew Institute to distribute young cashew nut plants to madrassas, they complained, were not successful. Participants emphasized that they did not favor the use of violence to advance a religious agenda, and that only moral values and adoration--not terrorism--were taught at Nampula madrassas.

¶3. The Charge asked for their views of the U.S. Government. One participant said that American foreign policy had always been characterized by diplomacy and good deeds but that the trend had reversed in recent years, while another participant called on the USG to change its policies. One representative stated that Muslims feel pain because of some elements of America's foreign policy, but that a distinction should be made between the USG and the American people. The Charge, noting that friends can disagree on certain issues, highlighted U.S. diplomatic efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and the increase in USG foreign assistance, especially in Africa. Asked about how America viewed Arab countries, the Charge explained that the U.S. had good relations with most Arab countries though a few countries in the region remained problematic. In conclusion, the Muslim leaders agreed with the Charge that our relationship should not be defined by extremists.

¶4. Comment: The Muslim leaders appreciated the Embassy's initiative to meet with them and to discuss a wide range of issues. The leaders invited further cooperation on initiatives of common interest, including HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. The leader of the Islamic Council also offered the use of its new radio station to reach all the Muslims in the north

with AIDS prevention messages. We intend to do so.
We were warmly received and encouraged to return to
further the U.S. Embassy's relationship with the
Muslim community in Northern Mozambique. End Comment.
Chapman